

## **Safety Practices in Combat**

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WASHINGTON, D.C.

The development of a safety program in combat environments is specified in Army Regulation 385-10 and demands the attention of the commander in the depth of the requirements.

Through the chain of command, the first full-time dedicated safety professional is generally at the brigade level. At the battalion and unit level, they are additional duty safety officers. The brigade combat safety officer is a member of the brigade commander's special staff and is instrumental in operating the safety program. The brigade combat safety officer may be a Department of Army Civilian, when available. He may also be a member of the HQ FORSCOM G-1 safety team as an Army Safety Augmentation Detachment member. The ASAD is assigned to fill the vacant brigade combat team safety slots as requested from the active Army deploying units.

### **WHAT IS THE VALUE?**

Combat safety officers monitor and manage the safety program. Their objective is to prevent accidents by raising the level of consciousness concerning safety issues for the Soldiers on combat missions and their combat support units. By working through the brigade commander, safety officers—

Make safety a force multiplier. By focusing attention on safety issues through the units, we can keep Soldiers in the fight. My experience showed that over a one-year period a brigade commander could expect to lose about one platoon of Soldiers as a result of accidents. This includes accidents occurring in the motor pool, during physical training and on combat missions. Accidents included falling from towers, physical training ankle fractures, negligent discharges, fratricides, traffic accidents, fires and combat vehicle rollovers. Over a 12-month period, there were more than 100 accidents.

Preserve equipment. Equipment transported and shipped to the fight can stay in the fight. Enormous cost savings are incurred when ground combat vehicles remain available for our Soldiers.

Become the commander's eyes and ears to accident prevention. Through accident investigations and data and causative analysis, the brigade safety officer can keep the commander informed on what units are having accidents, the types of accidents the brigade is incurring and what courses of action could be taken to reduce the accidents and their effects. This is further enhanced by surveys and inspections. All of this is designed to enhance the safety of Soldiers already in harm's way.

### **COMPOSITE RISK MANAGEMENT**

An integral part of the combat safety officer's value to the commander comes in training Soldiers and their leadership in the values of Composite Risk Management. Increasing the capability of the maneuver units to more accurately predict the hazards they may encounter on the mission and to mitigate those hazards is an integral part of the combat safety officer's job. The complete mission safety brief is critical to the success of the mission. It is all about force protection.